

# Something special to protect . . .

More than 2,400 Significant Natural Heritage Areas have been identified by NCNHP as areas important for conservation of the state's biodiversity, shown in green on the map below. Protecting these sites is critical for maintaining the ecological health of our state. While some areas are protected as parks or game lands, about half have no formal protection and we risk losing them. Highlighted below are five special places now protected and open to the public. These places represent some of our favorite "Conservation Success Stories."

## Elk Knob State Natural Area

Protects headwaters of the New River, a National Wild and Scenic River.

The second highest peak in Watauga County, offering panoramic views and protection for many rare species.

Photo by: Merrill Lynch



Photo by: The Nature Conservancy



## The Roanoke River

More than 80,000 acres of conservation land flank one of the most diverse river ecosystems on the Atlantic Slope.

The public can visit the Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge and N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission game lands or float the Roanoke River Paddle Trail.

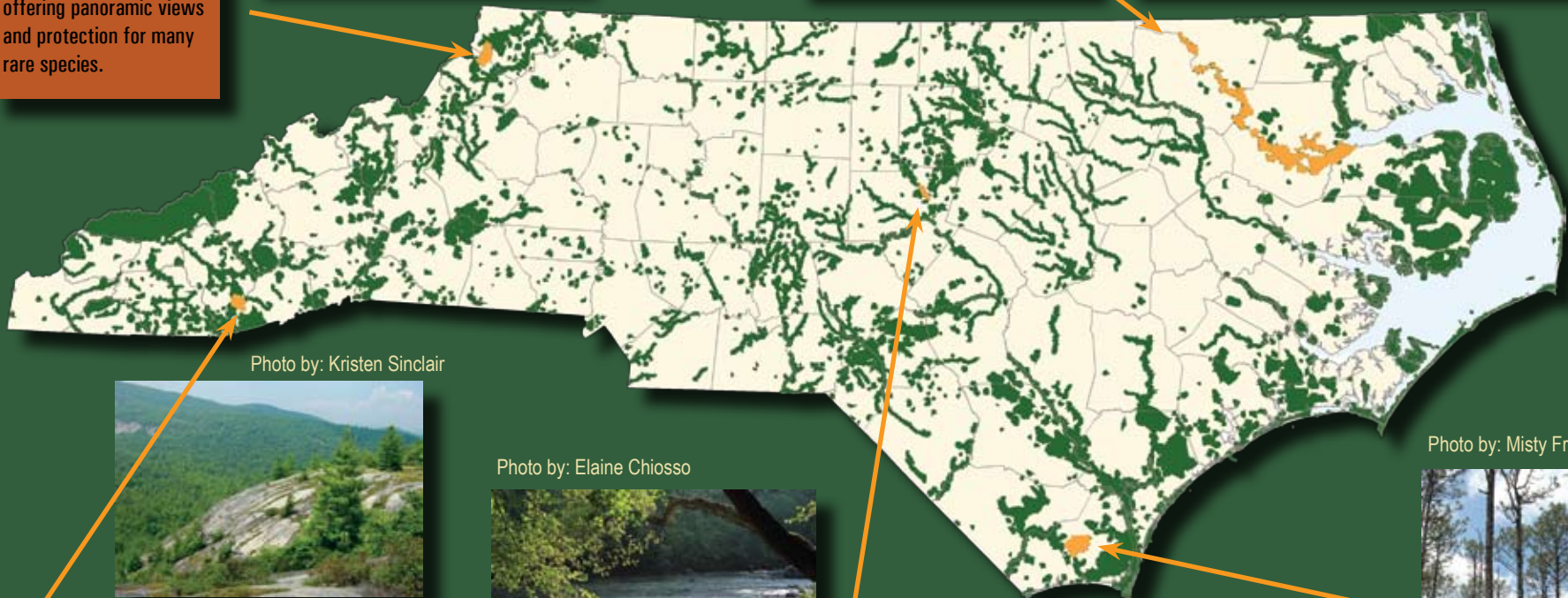


Photo by: Kristen Sinclair



Photo by: Elaine Chiosso



Photo by: Misty Franklin



## Panthertown Valley, Nantahala National Forest

Unique 7000-acre area containing steep granitic domes, rugged gorges, and unusual, flat-bottomed valleys, with sandy meandering streams.

Many waterfalls can be viewed from the valley floor. Trail systems are in place for horses, hikers and mountain bikers.

## Lower Haw River State Natural Area

A scenic river with rocky channels and numerous islands, including upland wooded bluffs.

50 species of breeding birds nest here and bald eagles have been seen foraging along the river.

## Green Swamp Preserve The Nature Conservancy

15,000 acres of high-quality natural lands, including some of the country's finest examples of longleaf pine savannas and pocosins.

Portions are open to the public for hiking. Other sections are enrolled in the wildlife game land program.